

52 Story of Kennecott's Utah Copper Mine

Utah Copper mine in Bingham Canyon

"I have arranged an unusual experience for you," the teacher suggested. "Today, class, we are going by bus across the Salt Lake Valley to Bingham Canyon to visit the copper mine. This great mine is the Utah Copper Division of the Kennecott Copper Corporation. Mr. F. C. Green, the General Manager of the Utah Copper Division, has kindly consented to show us the mine and tell us about it."

As they rode to Bingham, they discussed the things they most wanted to learn about the mine. "Ned has already told us that the Bingham mine is situated 30 miles to the southwest in the Oquirrh Mountains," Jane said. "Mr. Madsen, what does 'Oquirrh' mean?"

"It is an Indian name, Jane, meaning 'West Mountain,'" he replied.

As he and the students got out of the bus at the copper mine in Bingham Canyon, the instructor introduced the man who greeted them. "This is Mr. F. C. Green, who has been serving as the General Manager of the Utah Copper Division of Kennecott Copper, but who recently was promoted to Division Manager of the Western States." He continued, "Mr. Green is going to show us the mine and tell us the story of this great industry."

"It will be a pleasure to show you around. We like to have the young people of the state know about our company," Mr. Green remarked. "However, before showing you the gigantic mine, the mills, the smelter, and the refinery, I want to tell you the story of what we call the Utah Copper Division of the Kennecott Copper Corporation."

"Considerable mining of gold, silver, and lead was done at Bingham between

1864 and 1900. Although copper was present in abundance, very little of it was mined. Anyone who spent his time reclaiming that metal was considered 'tetched.' But there came a day when copper ore became the primary mineral produced at Bingham."

Utah Copper Company at Bingham

"The depression of 1893 resulted in lowering the prices of silver, lead, and gold. It almost closed the mines at Bingham. However, about that time Colonel Enos A. Wall arrived here and began to make secret tests on the ore. He found that it ran from 3% to 40% copper. Meanwhile he was quietly buying copper holdings and relocating old claims around Bingham. By 1896 he had acquired 200 acres and had spent \$20,000 in exploration. He was now ready to develop his claim.

"Wall and his associates hired Daniel C. Jackling and Robert C. Gemmell, two young engineers, to investigate their property. The history of copper mining

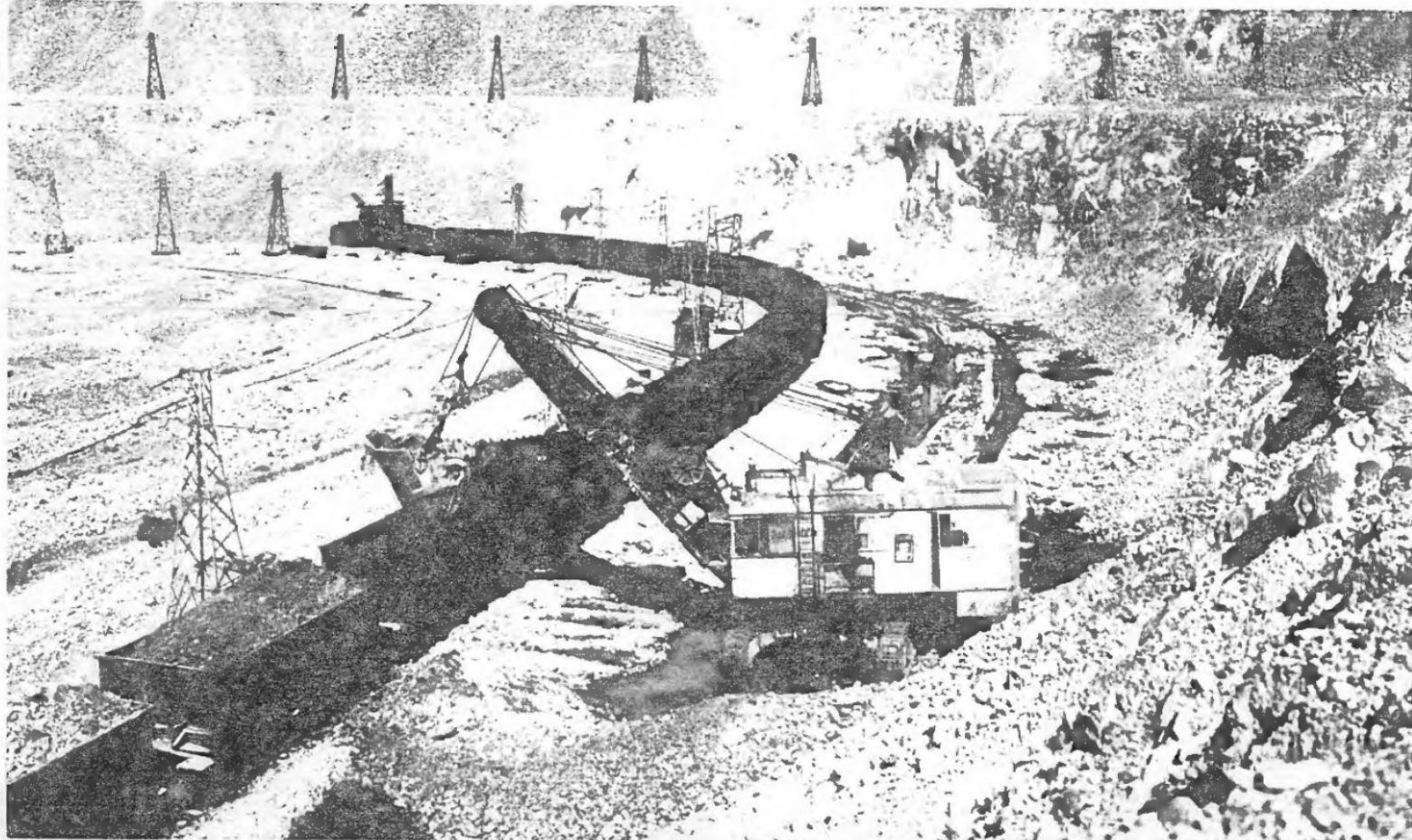
Daniel C. Jackling

Courtesy Utah State Historical Society



Electric shovel loading ore at Utah Copper Mine, Bingham Canyon

Photo — courtesy Kennecott Copper Corporation



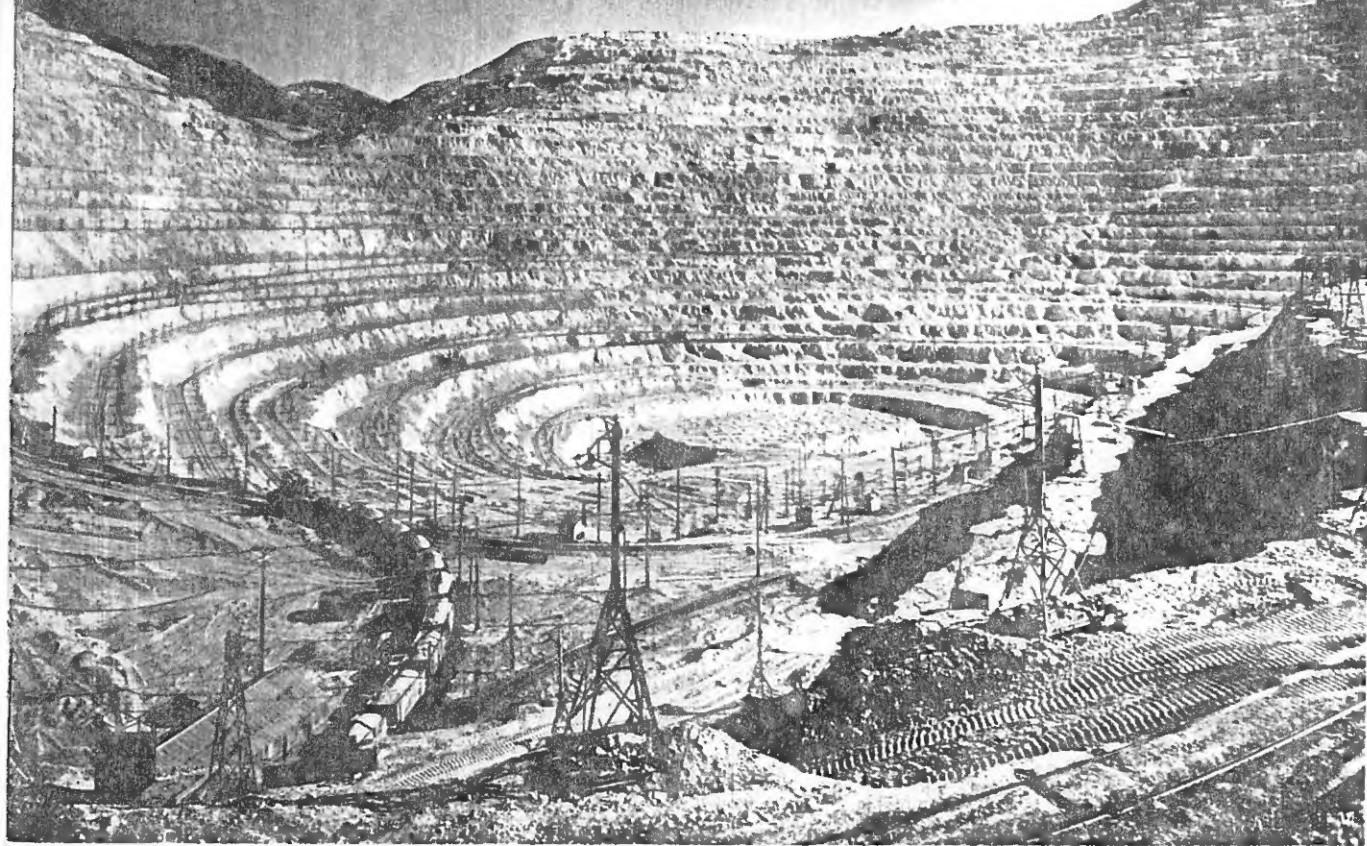


Photo — courtesy Kennecott Copper Corporation

World famous Utah Copper Mine of Kennecott Copper Corporation at Bingham Canyon

was changed as a result of the joint report of these two engineers, published in 1899. They believed that there was great wealth in mining low-grade copper ore if the mining and smelting were done by applying mass-production methods, plus improved knowledge of metals.

"On June 4, 1903, the Utah Copper Company was organized. Jackling and others had purchased an interest in Wall's property.

Jackling's idea of surface mining with steam shovels was put into operation in 1906. A small mill with the capacity of 300 tons a day was built at Copperton, a few miles below Bingham. The mill started operating in August, 1904. By 1910 the capacity of the mill had been increased to 1,000 tons daily.

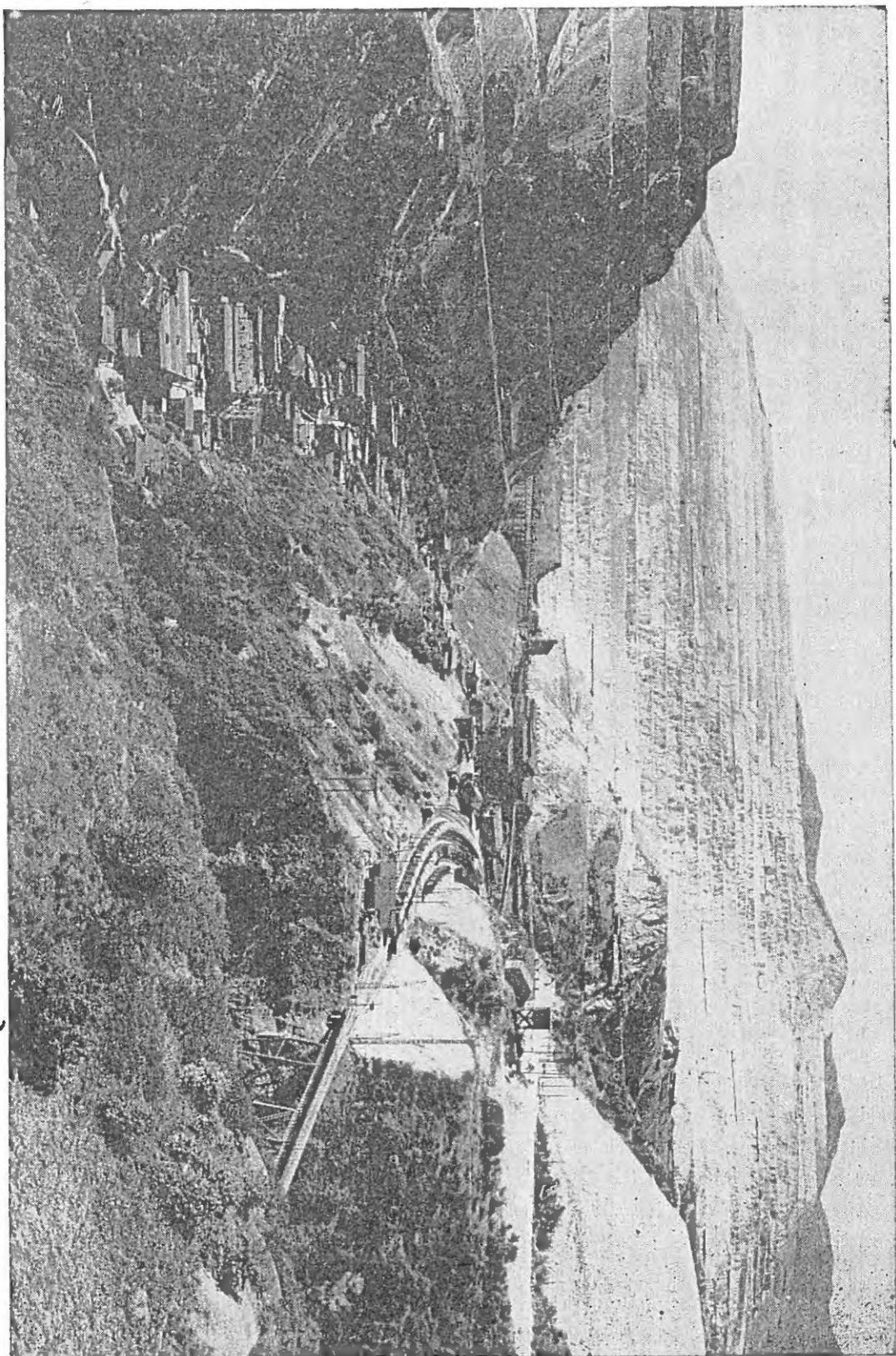
"At first, only ores containing 2% copper or more were used. The 2% ore amounted to 50 pounds of red metal per

ton of ore. But during recent years, improved methods in mining and handling the ore have made it possible for the Utah Copper to mine at a profit ore containing only one-half of one per cent copper, or 10 pounds of red metal to the ton.

"For many years only about 60% of the metal was recovered. But as a result of constant research and improvement, more than 90% is being recovered today," Mr. Green explained.

Utah Copper Mine at Bingham

"Now, young people, if you will accompany me, I shall show you the main features of the famous Utah Copper mine here in Bingham Canyon," Mr. Green remarked. As they gazed into the large amphitheater-like pit at the mine, he continued, "You will observe that the sides of the mine are cut into giant steps or benches. The 14 sub-levels average 50 feet and the upper levels 70



UTAH COPPER MINE AND BINGHAM CANYON